

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for manufacturing a press fabric for a paper machine, said method comprising:

5 providing a base fabric for said press fabric, said base fabric being in the form of an endless loop, said endless loop having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first and a second lateral edge, and a fabric width measured transversely between said lateral edges;

10 providing a multi-component strip for covering said outer surface of said base fabric in a closed helix, said strip having a beginning, a first lateral edge and a second lateral edge, a strip width measured transversely thereacross, said strip width being less than said fabric width, said strip having at least a strip of top laminate layer material and a heat-activated adhesive film bonded to one side of said strip of top laminate layer material;

15 attaching said side of said strip of top laminate layer material having said heat-activated adhesive film at said beginning of said multi-component strip to said outer surface of said base fabric at a point on said first lateral edge of said base fabric using heat and pressure;

20 continuing from said beginning of said multi-component strip, attaching said side of said strip of top laminate layer material having said heat-activated adhesive film to said outer surface of said base fabric in a closed helix having a plurality of turns  
25 using heat and pressure, wherein said first lateral edge of a turn of said multi-component strip being

attached to said outer surface abuts against said second lateral edge of a turn of said multi-component strip previously attached to said outer surface, until  
35 said outer surface of said base fabric is completely covered by said multi-component strip in a closed helix; and

40 cutting said multi-component strip at a point on said second lateral edge of said base fabric, whereby said multi-component strip forms a top laminate layer on said base fabric.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer material is a woven fabric.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer material is a nonwoven mesh.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer is a strip of thermoplastic sheet material.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said thermoplastic sheet material is of polyurethane.

6. A method as claimed in claim 4 further comprising the step of aperturing said strip of thermoplastic sheet material.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said heat-activated adhesive film is apertured.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of needling a staple fiber batt into said top laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip after attaching said strip to said base fabric.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step, after said base fabric is completely covered by said multi-component strip in a closed helix to form said top laminate layer, of trimming said multi-component strip along said first and second lateral edges of said base fabric.  
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10. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

providing a first and a second process roll, said first and second process rolls being rotatable about  
5 their respective axes and said axes being parallel to one another;

mounting said base fabric around said first and second process rolls, said first and second process rolls thereby being within said endless loop of said  
10 base fabric;

separating said first and second process rolls from one another to fixed positions, said base fabric thereby being placed under tension;

providing a pressure roll, said pressure roll  
15 forming a nip with said first process roll and pressing said base fabric against said first process roll;

rotating said first and second process rolls in a common direction;

20 heating said multi-component strip to activate  
said heat-activated adhesive film;

25 feeding said beginning of said multi-component  
strip into said nip at said first lateral edge of said  
base fabric, thereby attaching said top laminate layer  
at said beginning of said strip to said outer surface  
of said base fabric at a point on said first lateral  
edge thereof;

30 continuing to rotate said first and second  
process rolls in a common direction while feeding said  
multi-component strip into said nip, thereby attaching  
said top laminate layer to said outer surface of said  
base fabric in a closed helix, until said outer  
surface of said base fabric is completely covered by  
said strip in a closed helix.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 further  
comprising the step of dispensing said multi-component  
strip from a supply roll.

12. A method as claimed in claim 10 further  
comprising the step of turning said base fabric inside  
out before mounting said base fabric around said first  
and second process rolls.

13. A method as claimed in claim 10 further  
comprising the step of removing said base fabric from  
said first and second process rolls after said outer  
surface thereof is completely covered by said multi-  
5 component strip.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 further comprising the step of turning said base fabric inside out to place said top laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip on the inside thereof.

15. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using a heated first process roll.

16. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using a heated pressure roll.

17. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by directing a flow of hot air into said nip between said multi-component strip and said base fabric.

18. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using an infrared heater to heat said heat-activated adhesive film of said multi-component strip before said multi-component film  
5 enters said nip.

19. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said pressure roll extends at least for said fabric width.

20. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said pressure roll is shorter than said fabric width.

21. A method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising  
the step of heating said base fabric and said top  
laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip  
after needling said staple fiber batt therethrough to  
5 reactivate said heat-activated adhesive film and to  
further connect said staple fiber batt, said top  
laminate layer and said base fabric together.